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SUBJECT: UNHQ UPDATES ON UNAMI ISSUES

¶1. (SBU) Summary: During a regularly scheduled trilateral with the U.S. and UK on March 13, the UN,s Iraq team provided updates on UNAMI,s revised proposal for a long-term compound, a request for MNF-I protection during construction of support facilities for UNAMI at the Baghdad International airport (BIAP), progress on acquiring a civilian aircraft dedicated to UNAMI, and an anticipated increase in the number of UNAMI military advisors to match the expansion of UNAMI activities. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Julian Davis, the UN,s deputy team leader on Iraq, told USUN and UKUN that the Department of Political Affairs recently received UNAMI,s official report regarding the revised proposal for a long-term compound in Baghdad sited near the New Embassy Compound, including an estimated new cost revised downward to US\$98 million. SRSG de Mistura plans to address the UN,s budgeting committee, the ACABQ, in order to personally lobby for the compound. Next steps in planning for the compound include: 1) receiving a formal allocation of the site from the Iraqi government; 2) procuring a lien from the Iraqi government for 25 years; and 3) receiving a more specific commitment from the Iraqi government regarding the GOI's pledge to help pay for a portion of the compound,s construction.

¶3. (SBU) Davis also outlined UNAMI,s plans to begin construction for support facilities at BIAP, given the increase in UNAMI staff and the expected arrival of a dedicated civilian aircraft. UNAMI has chosen a contractor for the construction, which is expected to last 100 days. UNAMI asked its Georgian security contingent to provide security during construction activities, but the Georgians apparently refused. Davis said UNAMI has raised this issue with MNF-I, and has requested MNF-I support if the Georgians continue to refuse.

¶4. (SBU) Davis said UNAMI urgently needed to begin construction given that there is progress in the UN,s long-standing efforts to procure a dedicated civilian aircraft equipped with electronic counter-measures. The UN has solicited bids on the project, and hopes to have an aircraft in operation by May 1. Davis also noted that UNAMI intends to raise the number of military advisors from 5 to 17, to take into account increased UNAMI activities throughout the country.
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